

In the Claims

1-12 (Canceled).

13 (Currently Amended). A pharmaceutical composition comprising:

a nucleic acid sequence encoding a natriuretic hormone peptide, ~~or a biologically active portion of the natriuretic hormone peptide, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises~~ comprising an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:5 or a homolog thereof of SEQ ID NO: 5 having at least one conservative amino acid substitution, and an operably linked promoter sequence; and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

14-19 (Canceled).

20 (Currently Amended). An expression vector comprising:

a nucleic acid sequence encoding a natriuretic hormone peptide comprising ~~a biologically active portion of an amino acid sequence comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, or a homolog of SEQ ID NO: 5 or SEQ ID NO: 6~~ an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO: 5 or a homolog of SEQ ID NO: 5 having at least one conservative amino acid substitution, or comprising an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 6; and an operably linked promoter sequence.

21 (Previously Presented). The expression vector of claim 20, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO: 6.

22 (Canceled).

23 (Currently Amended). An isolated cell comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding a natriuretic hormone peptide, ~~the peptide comprising a biologically active portion of an amino acid sequence comprising the amino acid sequence of~~ comprising an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:5 or a homolog of SEQ ID NO: 5 having at least one conservative amino acid

substitution, or comprising SEQ ID NO: 6, or a homolog of SEQ ID NO: 5 or SEQ ID NO: 6; and an operably linked promoter sequence.

24 (Previously Presented). The isolated cell of claim 23, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO: 6.

25 (Currently Amended). An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding a biologically active portion of an amino acid sequence consisting essentially of: SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, or a homolog of SEQ ID NO: 5 or SEQ ID NO: 6 an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO: 5 or a homolog of SEQ ID NO: 5 having at least one conservative amino acid substitution, or comprising SEQ ID NO: 6.

26 (Canceled).

27 (Previously Presented). The pharmaceutical composition of claim 13, further comprising a chitosan.

28 (Currently Amended). An expression vector comprising: a nucleic acid sequence encoding a natriuretic hormone peptide, ~~or a biologically active portion of the natriuretic hormone peptide, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises~~ comprising an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO: 5 or a homolog thereof of SEQ ID NO: 5 having at least one conservative amino acid substitution, and an operably linked promoter sequence.

29 (Currently Amended). An isolated cell comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding a natriuretic hormone peptide, ~~or a biologically active portion of the natriuretic hormone peptide, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises~~ comprising an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO: 5 or a homolog thereof of SEQ ID NO: 5 having at least one conservative amino acid substitution, and an operably linked promoter sequence.

30 (Currently Amended). An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding a natriuretic hormone peptide, or a biologically active portion of the natriuretic hormone peptide, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises comprising an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO: 5 or a homolog thereof of SEQ ID NO:5 have at least one conservative amino acid substitution.

31-42 (Canceled).

43 (Previously Presented). The pharmaceutical composition of claim 13, further comprising a liposome.

44 (Canceled).

45 (Previously Presented). The expression vector of claim 28, wherein the expression vector is a DNA plasmid.

46-47 (Canceled).

48 (Previously Presented). The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 13, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide consists of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 5.

49 (Previously Presented). The expression vector according to claim 28, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide consists of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 5.

50 (Previously Presented). The isolated cell according to claim 29, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide consists of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 5.

51 (Previously Presented). The isolated nucleic acid sequence according to claim 30, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide consists of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 5.

52 (Currently Amended). The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 13, wherein the nucleic acid sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO: 12 or~~ SEQ ID NO: 18.

53 (Currently Amended). The expression vector according to claim 20, wherein the nucleic acid sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO: 12, SEQ ID NO: 13, SEQ ID NO: 18~~[[,]] or SEQ ID NO: 19.

54 (Currently Amended). The isolated cell according to claim 23, wherein the nucleic acid sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO: 12, SEQ ID NO: 13, SEQ ID NO: 18~~[[,]] or SEQ ID NO: 19.

55 (Currently Amended). The isolated nucleic acid sequence according to claim 25, wherein the nucleic acid sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO: 12, SEQ ID NO: 13, SEQ ID NO: 18~~[[,]] or SEQ ID NO: 19.

56 (Currently Amended). The expression vector according to claim 28, wherein the nucleic acid sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO: 12 or~~ SEQ ID NO: 18.

57 (Currently Amended). The isolated cell according to claim 29, wherein the nucleic acid sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO: 12 or~~ SEQ ID NO: 18.

58 (Currently Amended). The isolated nucleic acid sequence according to claim 30, wherein the nucleic acid sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO: 12 or~~ SEQ ID NO: 18.

59 (Currently Amended). A pharmaceutical composition comprising:
a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding a natriuretic hormone peptide, ~~or a biologically active portion of the natriuretic hormone peptide, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises an~~ comprising an amino acid sequence comprising SEQ ID NO: 6 ~~or a~~

homolog thereof, and an operably linked promoter sequence; and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

60 (Previously Presented). The pharmaceutical composition of claim 59, further comprising a liposome.

61 (Previously Presented). The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 59, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide consists of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 6.

62 (Currently Amended). The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 59, wherein the nucleic acid sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO: 13~~ or SEQ ID NO: 19.

63 (New). The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 13, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 5.

64 (New). The expression vector according to claim 28, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 5.

65 (New). The isolated cell according to claim 29, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 5.

66 (New). The isolated nucleic acid molecule according to claim 30, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 5.

67 (New). The expression vector according to claim 20, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises an amino acid sequence consisting of SEQ ID NO: 6.

68 (New). The isolated cell according to claim 23, wherein the natriuretic hormone peptide comprises an amino acid sequence consisting of SEQ ID NO: 6.

69 (New). The isolated nucleic acid sequence according to claim 25, wherein the amino acid sequence consists of SEQ ID NO: 6.